

WEST MIDLANDS ISDN Newsletter

April 2025 Edition



STROKE ASSOCIATION – UNLOCKING POTENTIAL A BOLD VISION FOR STROKE CARE IN ENGLAND

Stroke is the leading cause of adult disability in the UK and the fourth leading cause of death. Every day in the UK, another 240 people wake up to the catastrophic impact of a stroke. Mums, dads, grandparents, young people, even children – anyone can have a stroke, and its impact is traumatic. Stroke causes brain damage and can leave survivors unable to move, see, speak or even swallow. The effects are not just physical. Stroke can also lead to personality changes and depression.

Now is the time for bold action. As the Government shapes its 10-Year Health Plan for England, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to set stroke care on a trajectory toward equity, innovation, and excellence. Stroke is preventable, treatable, and recoverable. Together, we can ensure a future where every stroke survivor receives the care and support they need to thrive. ISDNs are at the heart of stroke transformation, they are critical organisations in scaling up the innovation and quality improvement work in stroke and making this the norm for stroke care everywhere.

To view the report and the 10-year plan please click [here](#)



SQUIRE WORKSTREAM UPDATE

Our Midlands SQuIRe Manager, Georgina Charles, will be planning a series of SQuIRe events for this year. These events are designed to foster learning, collaboration, and support within the region and across the broader network. Further information about each event will be shared in future editions.

Upcoming Midlands SQuIRe Events:

- Midlands SQuIRe Projects Day – 4th June
- Support After Project Completion – 6th August
- ICSS Model: Challenges and Support – 1st October
- Measurement for Improvement – 3rd December

Next Steps

The immediate priorities will be to support teams in closing out their SQuIRe-funded projects. This includes ensuring that all deliverables are met, final reports are completed, and any necessary documentation is submitted.



ACCELERATED ACCESS COLLABORATIVE (AAC) FUNDS INNOVATIONS THAT SUPPORT EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND REHABILITATION OF STROKE PATIENTS

The AAC, through the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) Healthcare, has awarded £2.5 million for the development of five 'Phase 3' innovations that support stroke patients. Phase 3 funding aims to facilitate the collection of evidence in real-world settings to accelerate the adoption and spread of late-stage innovations into healthcare settings. The innovations include a point-of-care blood-test for pre-hospital identification of stroke patients for use in ambulances, and an immersive XR rehabilitation solution for post-stroke rehabilitation.

Please click [here](#) for more information



WM ISDN TEAM AWAY DAY

We hosted an away day on 9th April, inviting key stakeholders to the meeting. It was a great opportunity to reflect on all the good work achieved throughout 2024/25 and our priorities for 2025/26. With the recent announcement of NHSE abolishment and reduction in ICB staffing, there is a lot of tension and turmoil over the future of teams and networks. However, as an ISDN, we will continue to work with our teams and all our stakeholders to deliver our 2-year plan. We will be sharing our year in review for 2024/25, priorities for 2025/26, and an executive summary of our portfolio of work soon.

Reflection on the day:

"Following on from the success of our engagement event in March 2024, our 2-year workplan has focused our efforts and workstreams on supporting the delivery of high-quality stroke care across the pathway, with a strong focus on rehabilitation, prioritising systems and pathways, workforce, and stakeholder integration. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our stakeholders, teams, and working groups for their support with our work and continued encouragement."

Fozia Ikram-Bashir, ISDN Senior Manager



NEW ACT FAST CAMPAIGN

The NHS recently launched a refreshed version of its 'Act FAST' behaviour change campaign, encouraging the public to call 999 immediately on any single sign of a stroke. The 'Act FAST' campaign has been incredibly successful since it was first launched in 2009, and has been effective in increasing knowledge of stroke symptoms and driving action. The new campaign was developed to keep the message fresh in people's minds, and address some critical misconceptions that people have about stroke, including that symptoms will present in a dramatic way and that all three of the FAST symptoms need to be present before acting. The refreshed campaign focused on driving knowledge of the single, subtle signs of stroke and intention to act urgently.

Full evaluation is underway, and early results show that it has been highly effective. Tracking research with the target audience shows that across the campaign, there have been increases in knowledge of stroke symptoms, knowledge that stroke may not always appear severe, and knowledge that you should call 999 for just one sign. Additionally, confidence in recognising the signs of a stroke and urgency to act have all increased.



ID STROKE: THINK ALOUD INTERVIEWS

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) is exploring variation in current UK clinical practice for investigating the aetiology of stroke. The project, Identification of Stroke Aetiology to Reduce Reoccurrence of Stroke and Vascular Events (ID-STROKE), is led by Dr Clare Gordon in the School of Nursing and Midwifery and is funded by the Burdett Trust for Nursing (UCLan Ethics Ref: HEALTH 01236). This work is a follow-on from a survey on the same topic, which NHS organisations may have supported UCLan in recruiting for last year.

Research Opportunity

Clinician Case-Discussion Interview

Who are we looking for?
We are looking for health care professionals that work in a NHS stroke service, and who have decision-making responsibility for the investigation of stroke aetiology.

What's involved?
A case-discussion interview, followed by a reflective discussion that should take 60-90-minutes.
You will be presented with a clinical case, and asked to talk through the decisions you would make to investigate the aetiology of the stroke.
You will be guided on how to do this.
You will be offered an £80 thank you voucher for your time

How do you get involved?
Email Dr Clare Gordon on the email below to express an interest. You will be sent a study information sheet giving you further information on the research. You can then decide if you want to take part, and schedule your interview.

Contact: Email: IDStroke@uclan.ac.uk

APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

- ⇒ This month's West Midlands Thrombectomy Network meeting hosted two good presentations: Door in & Door out (DIDO) pilot project from WMAS and an overview of Mechanical Thrombectomy (MT) rates in our region for 24/25.
- ⇒ A regional MT Strategy Workshop was hosted by Dr Collette Marshall bringing together all the Midlands MT teams to agree and discuss a regional MT Strategy to work towards. Watch this space for further developments.
- ⇒ Hereford & Worcester (H&W) ICS Stroke Rehabilitation and Life After Stroke services follow up event took place at the beginning of the month to put together a suitable options appraisal for the rehabilitation pathway across H&W in line with their centralisation plans.
- ⇒ We kicked off our first West Midlands Stroke Advanced Nursing in Acute Care this month discussing membership, sharing good practice, troubleshooting, and education and training opportunities. For more information, please get in touch.
- ⇒ Our Clinical Stroke Education Webinar was well received with positive feedback about the great presentations. Talks featured were 1) large core thrombectomy trials and 2) thrombectomy in patients aged above 80. For those that were unable to attend, the recording will be available to watch on our FutureNHS platform. Please click [here](#) to watch the webinar– **Please note that you will need to register if you do not have an account and join our workspace platform.**
- ⇒ Finally, we hope you all had a good Easter break!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- BSol CPD final session – 8th May
- Charity Cycle Event in aid of Worcestershire NHS Stroke Pathway - 31st May. If you would like to donate [please click here](#).
- Sing for Stroke day as part of stroke awareness month - 19th May. For more information please contact northmidlandsidsn@uhm.nhs.uk
- UK and ROI Acute Stroke Simulation Course Dates available from May onwards. For more information [please click here](#)

IN THE NEXT EDITION

National Stroke Awareness Month | May highlights| SQuIRe update and much more